

On March 25, 1830, at Albany,¹ "Pigeons had begun their migration, and thousands of them were overwhelmed in the storm; and they were taken in great abundance in the valley of the Butter-milk creek."

(*To be concluded.*)

GENERAL NOTES.

A Case of the Migration and Return of the European Teal in Massachusetts.—The following facts must be taken only for what they are worth, for unfortunately the data are incomplete. There is, however, no doubt in my mind that we are dealing with a case of the migration, and return to the place of birth, of a non-indigenous bird.

In the spring of 1909, Mr. Thomas Johnston came over from England to enter my employment, and brought with him five pairs of live European Teal (*Nettion crecca*), together with some other water-fowl. These birds were bred in England on the estate of Sir Richard Graham in Cumberland County, where many interesting experiments in propagating water-fowl are in progress.

The teal suffered many vicissitudes of fortune, from various causes, and were reduced in 1910 to two pairs. These two pairs were kept with other water-fowl in a small, enclosed, artificial pond, in the orchard at Wenham, situated about 75 yards from the farm-house, 40 yards from the road, and a third of a mile from Wenham Lake. No other varieties of teal were kept.

About the middle of June, 1910, two downy young were led out into the pond by one of the female teal. These thrived amazingly and obtained their wings so soon that the first attempt at their capture, which was put off for fear of disturbing other fowl, resulted in finding that the youngsters were too spry for the net. They turned out to be both females, and were not disturbed again. They traded between the pond and Wenham Lake all the summer and fall, spending the greater part of their time in the enclosed pond and feeding on a mud flat on the eastern shore of the lake. They were perfectly tame while in the pond, and were only flushed with difficulty, but outside its boundaries they were as wild as any teal.

On December 6, the pond, and also the lake, froze. The other fowl were placed in winter quarters the day before the freeze, and our teal vanished, as we thought for good.

¹ Munsell, Joel. The Annals of Albany. Albany, 1858, Vol. IX, p. 206.

On the morning of April 19, 1911, a single female teal was found in the pond, none of the other fowl having yet been released from winter quarters. This teal was perfectly at home and absolutely tame. She allowed close approach, and when actually flushed made the same characteristic flight to the lake, keeping only a few yards off the ground. In a short time she returned. At the present date, May 17, she is still with us.

All that can be said is that this bird is a female green-winged teal, further identification being impossible as the plumage of the females of the American and European species is similar. I believe however that this returned bird is one of those that hatched in our pond, for the following reasons.

First, its actions are exactly similar to the birds of the previous summer, and very different from those which a strange teal would exhibit.

Second, it returned to a spot that no wild water-fowl have ever used.

Third, it shows no disposition to migrate north.

Fourth, the occurrence of Green-winged Teal in this locality in the spring is so rare that I have never met with one.

It seems also far more likely that our bird migrated to at least a much warmer latitude, for it could not possibly have wintered here, especially during such a severe winter as that of 1910-11. It returned nearly four weeks after the ice was out of the ponds and rivers.

Such cases, granted we are not mistaken, and also those where birds have successfully returned to their nests, when transported far beyond their natural range (see Watson, Carnegie Institute Publication No. 103, p. 227) force one to assume a directive sense in birds far beyond anything at present conceivable.—J. C. PHILLIPS, *Wenham, Mass.*

Records of *Butorides brunnescens* in Cuba.—I beg to report the capture on January 19, 1911, of a specimen of *Ardea brunnescens* Gundl., in a small lagoon on the San Carlos Sugar Plantation at Guantanamo, Cuba. The specimen is an adult female in fine plumage and was the only heron about the lagoon at the time.

I believe this is the first record for eastern Cuba. Dr. Gundlach in his work on Cuban birds states having taken it once in western Cuba on the Siguagua Creek between Moron and Jucaro, when he found a family of them, but mentions no date. He also says that he heard of another specimen being taken near Havana which was sold to a taxidermist of that city. I am also informed that Prof. Bangs records having taken two specimens in the Isle of Pines, so mine is the fifth Cuban record for the species.—CHARLES T. RAMSDEN, *Guantanamo, Cuba.*

"Nuptial Plumes" of the American Bittern.—The writer read with peculiar interest the account by Mr. Brewster¹ of the "nuptial plumes" worn by certain bitterns, as he had himself witnessed the display

¹ Auk, XXVIII, 1911, pp. 90-100.